

TOURIST POTENTIALS OF WALLACEBURG - AN EVALUATION

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TOURIST POTENTIALS OF WALLACEBURGH

An Evaluation of the Baldoon Parklands]




Prepared for
The Ontario Department of Tourism & Information

By
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Toronto

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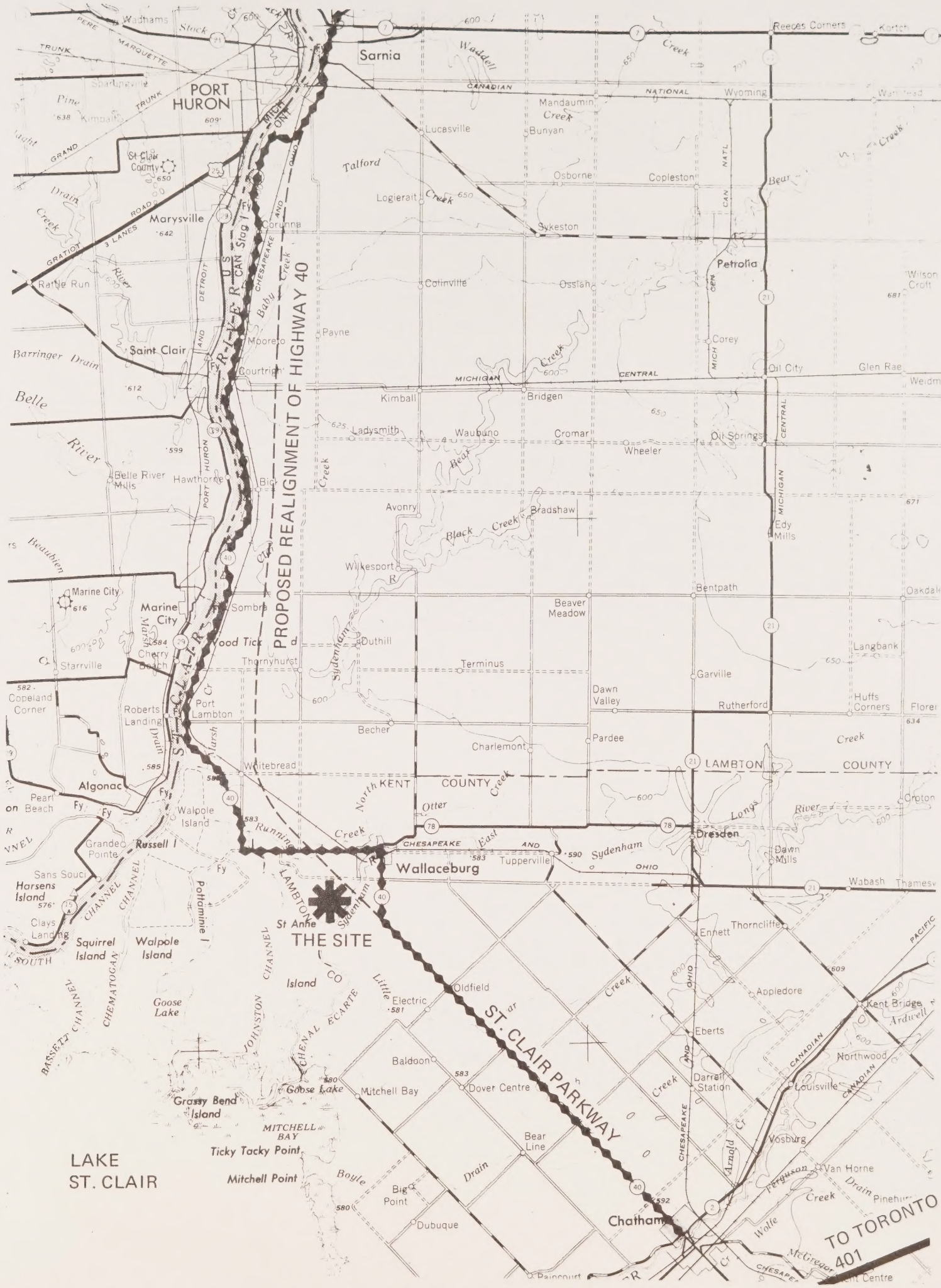


FIG. 1 LOCATION MAP

INTRODUCTION

The town of Wallaceburg enthusiastically endorses the concept of developing a major tourist attraction nearby. This enthusiasm is supported by impressive and wide range of development potentials--based on natural attractions, local history and scholarly research, and an active organizational committee.

Project Planning Associates Limited was commissioned by the Department of Tourism and Information to review the circumstances that apply to possible tourist attractions; to evaluate the opportunities and constraints that pertain to developing or augmenting these attractions, and to propose conceptual programs of action for review at the local, regional and provincial levels of government. Representatives of the firm that had previous experience in the region made site visits and interviewed local citizens and the town's tourist development committee. Literature on the history of community development was researched, including two recent graduate thesis accepted by the Union of Western Ontario, and materials in the collection of the Provincial Archives.

CONCLUSIONS

Tourist facilities that attract travellers from afar, interest visitors for an extended period of time and provide opportunities for these visitors to leave money in the region, are the ideal criteria for development--provided of course, that development is socially and ecologically acceptable to the residents of the region. Investment in tourist attractions, accommodations and services, by both the private and the public sectors, are most readily justified if a project has year-round appeal.

Southwestern Ontario has abundant historical resources and part of the physical environment considered to the requisite components for contemporary tourist attractions. The region's general shortage of suitable hill country for winter sport near the waters edge has diminished its potential for investment. This condition is particularly evident in the Wallaceburg area where the terrain is flat. Investments in tourist development could be justified if programs emphasizing the unique cultural resource were interpreted to visitors in a form that would sustain year-round interest.

Our evaluation of the potentials favouring expansion to tourism in the Wallaceburg region are based on the following features:

1. Water Gateway to the St. Clair Parkway

Visitors travelling north from the populated tourist market areas of Toronto, London, Windsor and Detroit get their first impression of the St. Clair River system at Wallaceburg. It appears natural that a special feature here should be part of the total St. Clair Parkway experience, reinforcing and interpreting the concept of the Parkway system.

We recommend that the special gateway requirements of Parkway and cruise boat visitors to the St. Clair River recreational system be included as design criteria in any major tourist development in Wallaceburg. This would include a strong program tie between the Parkway and the major attractions, marina and camping facilities for boaters and motor tourists and coordinated tourist information services.

2. Ethnic Heritage

The Wallaceburg locale has a wealth of cultural background. While people whose mother tongue is English predominate, French, Dutch, German, Czechoslovakian, Italian, Hungarian and Polish cultures are represented in sizable proportions of the county's population.

The countryside near Wallaceburg is richly associated with Indian culture, ranging from the contemporary struggle for self-determination back to prehistory times. Blacks that settled here in the nineteenth century have added a unique dimension to the local cultural mosaic.

Determination of how various groups working together have settled and improved the countryside has contemporary appeal. Demonstration of this cultural interaction should be part of a program of tourist development.

3. Historic Heritage

Apart from a promise of information on pre Western-European uses of land and water,⁽¹⁾ the history of Wallaceburg and region is strongly tied to man's application of technology and industrialization to the land. Vestiges of the machine culture responsible for contemporary settlement patterns in the region appear to be adequate as the basis of an important regional educational resource. If both the drainage and agriculture equipment were properly displayed and interpreted, a tourist attraction of international interest could be developed.

We recommend that Wallaceburg be identified as the locale for the development of a provincial museum of agricultural technology.⁽²⁾ The primary emphasis would be in illustrating how man has worked with ecological forces--to turn

(1) Anthropological research by University of Windsor currently in process.

(2) Criteria for such an exhibit; see Irwin, R.W., A Review of Land Drainage in Ontario. Eng. Tech. Publ. #7, Dept. of Engineering Sciences, Ont. Agri. College, Guelph, 1961; and Clark, L.J., the Baldoon Settlement Lands: The Effect of Changing Drainage Technology, 1804-1967, thesis presented to Faculty of Graduate Studies, the Univ. of Western Ontario, London, 1970.

difficult but arable lands into production units that feed and enrich society. The display would interpret how man has related to the land from pre-historic time to the present.

4. Community Based Recreational Needs and Services

The town of Wallaceburg is at a size where the demand for local recreational opportunities is as broad in scope as an urban area with several times its population. The town has not the financial resources needed to provide the desired facilities.

We recommend that the broader community recreational needs of Wallaceburg and region be appraised and a plan and priority program be developed for meeting these needs. The siting of any recommended facilities should serve broad community needs and be based primarily on local benefit criterion.

5. Tourist Environment in the Town of Wallaceburg

Visitors to the Parkway or to any major attraction near Wallaceburg will require food, accommodation and a variety of complementary tourist services. The role for Wallaceburg's business community in making the town attractive to visitors does not appear to be defined fully, nor is there evidence of many of the techniques for capturing a larger share of tourist interest in the town being put to good use.

"Main" Street Wallaceburg, Jones Street, Wallace Street and Dufferin Avenue could be made more attractive to tourists. Like many Ontario communities, the waterfront in Wallaceburg's commercial section exhibits a backyard character, reserved for service and storage. The town has the water frontage that could make it the Amsterdam of Ontario if these natural potentials were realized.

Wallaceburg has no tourist establishment that hold membership in the Ontario Motel Association or in the Association of Tourist Resorts of Ontario.

While membership alone is no guarantee of quality accommodation, the guidebooks published by these Associations are often the principal sources of information available to travellers considering a first visit to an area.

Good food and good accommodation for a variety of visitors' tastes and budgets are an essential component of any tourist plan. Financial investment in any major tourist development in Wallaceburg should be backed by substantial private investment in supporting facilities of quality.



REGIONAL CONCEPT
BALDOON PARKLANDS

FIGURE 2

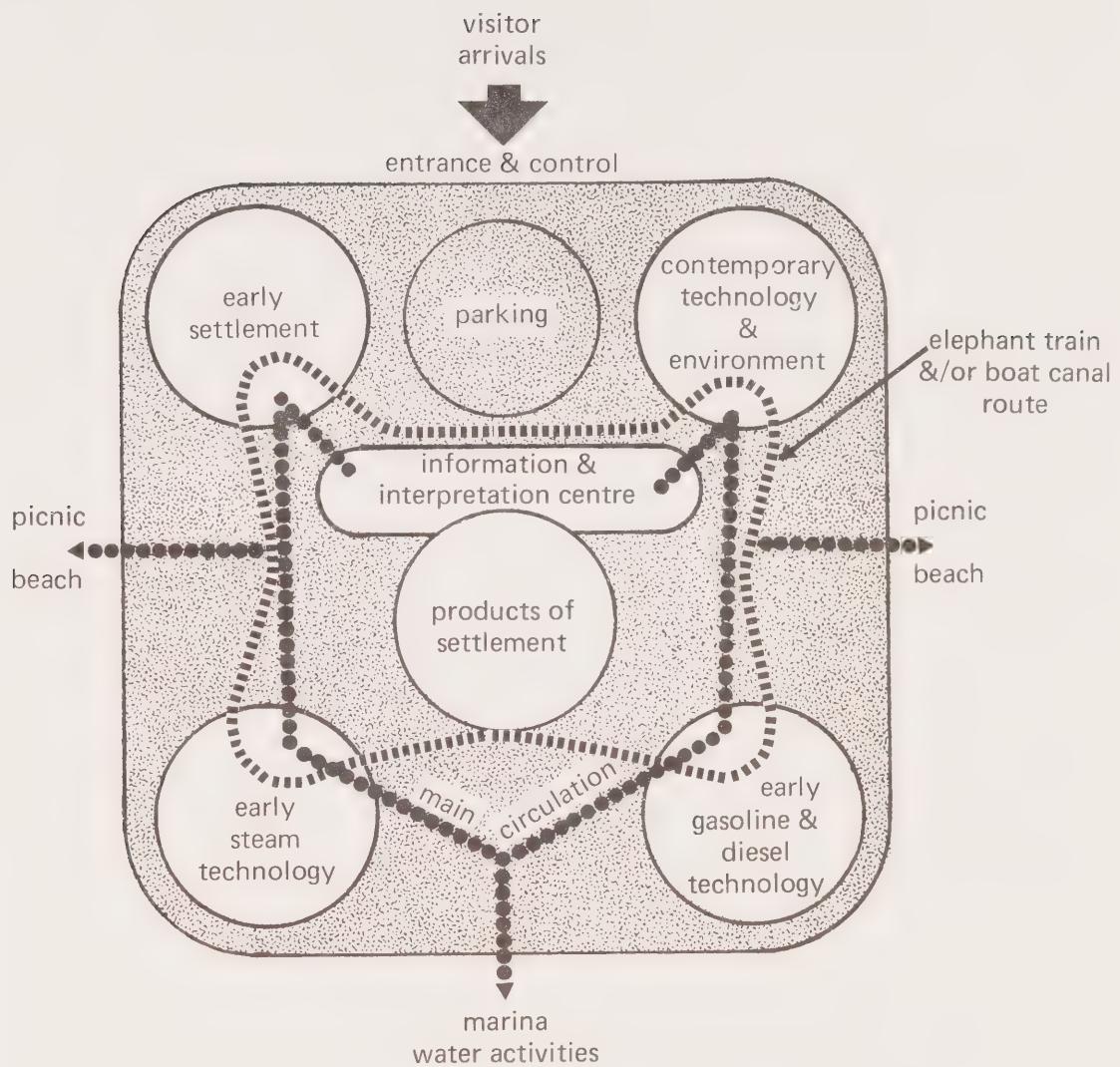
CONCEPT PLAN FOR DEVELOPMENT

Figure 2 indicates a general scheme for locating a Museum of Agricultural Technology in part of the original Selkirk block of 1804. This portion of the original site was selected due to its nearness to the assumed location of the Baldoon settlement, the suitability of the land for demonstration purposes, and potential of providing several types of complementary water oriented recreational facilities.

The proposed Highway 40 Bypass around Wallaceburg was given a Second Priority classification in the D.H.O. Highway Planning Study of 1967. Part of the right-of-way has been acquired and functional designs have been approved for that portion south of Dufferin Avenue including the Sydenham River crossing. This route will provide visitors with ready access to the Museum site via the Dover-Gore of Chatham Line Road and Dufferin Avenue intersections. A new road extension running north of the existing site road to Dufferin Avenue is recommended to provide better access to tourist attractions in Wallaceburg.

Two motel or tourist areas are suggested in the acute angles formed by this new road and the proposed Bypass. Both areas could serve vacation and industrial/commercial visitors.

We recommend that the remaining portions of the original Selkirk holdings near Wallaceburg be reserved for future urban uses including residential, institutional and recreational development. A golf course reserve is suggested as a recreational facility capable of attracting visitors and serving local needs.



MUSEUM OF AGRICULTURAL
TECHNOLOGY
SITE DEVELOPMENT
CONCEPT

FIGURE 3

SITE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

Figure 3 indicates our approach to organizing an outdoor exhibit of man's working with forces of nature, from the earliest known time to the present. The design program for the development of this diagram would include selected examples of the technology continuum and the resulting domestic life styles of the inhabitants of the region.

- Indian habitation - showing Iroquoian culture and relationship to environment prior to earlier settlers; blending into-
- Voyager, hunter and trapper culture; into-
- Legislative partition of lands - English speaking colonists or Selkirk colonists; into-
- Middle homesteading period and first use of steam power to clear and drain lands; into-
- High Industrial Society - diesel and gasoline power; and finally into-
- Post Industrial Society where land use and protection of the environment are primary.

The outdoor display would be entered from an interpretive and information centre. In the centre the visitor would have the opportunity of learning of the general nature of the outdoor display and the interrelationships of the five areas portrayed. The centre also would contain source materials on the more detailed aspects of regional settlement suitable for basic research.

Outdoor displays would be organized in a manner that provides an appropriate environment for each object or event. Consequently landscape screening between main exhibits will be used extensively, which tends to increase distances perceptually. We envisage that two or more modes of transportation will be required--pedestrian paths plus some form of mechanical conveyance. Railways and boat canals have been suggested as suitable devices for moving people around the grounds. The train concept could be either a separate right-of-way rail system or rubber tired equipment that uses a portion of the pedestrian path system. Both options have a high volume

potential. Canals would be quite feasible and well suited to the exhibit and to the terrain. The volume of visitors transported in this fashion would depend upon the type of boats used. It is feasible to consider a range of canal boats from canoes to Amsterdam tour boats.

Adjacent to the interpretive centre would be the exhibition of the products of settlement. This display--possibly floral gardens would be based on the theme of many cultures working together to create the current harmonious environment in Southwestern Ontario.

COSTS AND PHASING

Every year more ancient drainage and agricultural equipment disappears from the Wallaceburg region. The last known structure contemporary with the Baldoon Settlement was raised recently. Commitments toward implementation must be accompanied with funds to acquire and restore suitable display materials.

The following items represent estimated development cost allowances to complete the program defined in the Concept Plan.

Final Inventory Research, Program Development and Functional Design Studies	\$ 25,000.00
Land Acquisition, 100 to 150 acres	175,000.00
Infrastructure--utilities, roads and parking	250,000.00
Interpretive Centre (winterized) 20,000 sq.ft.	400,000.00
Acquisition and Installation of Outdoor Display Materials	150,000.00
Reconstruction Projects, 30 structures	300,000.00
Site Development--paths, pedestrian bridges, landscape lighting, other visitor services	1,500,000.00
Visitor Railway System (1.5 miles of tracks)	250,000.00
Marina for 75 boats	150,000.00
Acquisition of material for Interpretive Centre (10 year program)	250,000.00
Contingency Allowance @ 20%	670,000.00
	<hr/>
	\$4,120,000.00

OPERATING COSTS

The curator or director should be employed at the start of the functional research and programming stage. Additional operational staff should be selected during the construction period. The interpretive staff must be hired and trained prior to the public opening. The following unescalated allowances are presented for illustrative purposes:

	<u>Admin.</u>	<u>Interpretive</u>	<u>Plant & Grounds</u>	<u>Total</u>
Year 1	25,000	-	-	25,000
Year 2	30,000	-	15,000	45,000
Year 3	35,000	10,000	20,000	65,000
Year 4	40,000	30,000	40,000	110,000
Year 5	50,000	45,000	45,000	140,000
Year 6 and thereafter	50,000	45,000	50,000	145,000

OPERATING REVENUES

The per-day design capacity of the site should range between 7,500 and 10,000 visitors. This will require parking and visitor service facilities for a peak visitor load of 4,000 persons. Assuming a 10-week peak season, admission and related revenues would probably produce an annual return of about \$100,000 after year 6. This amount would be higher or lower depending upon the quality of displays, promotion of the shoulder months, and integration of site to regional educational programs.

APPENDIX A

COMPARATIVE COST/BENEFITS POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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Item	Capital Cost Factors per tourist unit provided	Operating Cost Factors per tourist unit served	Demand Factors	Revenue Factors per tourist unit
1. MUSEUM PARK	H	H	(H)	(M)
<u>A. Regional Heritage</u>				
-Boat Building				
-Tobacco Growing				
-General Agriculture				
-Ethnic Heritage				
-Negro				
-Indian				
-French				
-British				
-Other				
<u>B. Local Heritage</u>				
-Pumping Display				
-Ditch Digging Display				
-Tile Manufacturing				
-Tile Laying				
<u>C. Cafe and Shop</u>	M-H	M-H	(H)	(M)
2. AQUARIUM PARK	M	M	(H)	(M)
3. BOTANICAL PARK	H	H	(H)	(H)
4. PICNIC PARK	M	M	(H)	(M)
5. CAMPING PARK	M-H	M-H	(H)	(M)
6. GAME PRESERVE	L-M	L	(M)	Nil
7. SPORTS ARENA	H	H	(L)	(L)
8. RAILWAY	H	H	(H)	(H)
9. ICE FISHING	L	L	Winter H	Nil
10. MARINA	H	H	(H)	(H)
11. PARKING & GENERAL CIRCULATION	M	M	(H)	(M)

H=High

M=Medium

L=Low

()=Summer conditions only

Project
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Limited



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